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ABSTRACT

In an effort to expand the available data on options for dropouts, a special research study was conducted in Phoenix, Arizona, during the 1979-80 school year. The study investigated why dropouts leave school, why they return, and what they do while they are out of school. It also examined the employment and training opportunities available to them. Four brochures aimed specifically at potential dropouts were developed to present the information from the study. The brochures are included. (Author/IBT)

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Utilizing Community-Based Information to Develop Program Recommendations and Intervention Materials for Potential Dropouts (CAROL A. MORRIS, MARY JANE FINLEY, and LINDA WHEELER)

What, if any, options exist for dropouts and why do dropouts return to school? An investigative research study was conducted during the 1979-80 school year to identify 1) school and training opportunities in the public and private sector and 2) results of special surveys of former dropouts to determine why they dropped out, what their plans were, what they did, and why they returned to school. Also presented are student ideas for program change, researcher's recommendations, and Board policy analysis. Follow-through activities have included dissemination of the information, modification of Board policies, and publication of a series of student-oriented brochures based on the findings of the study.

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EA 014 034

# Utilizing Community-Based Information to Develop Program Recommendations and Intervention Materials for Potential Dropouts

CAROL A. NORRIS, MARY JANE FINLEY, and LINDA WHEELER

Carol A. Norris, Mary Jane Finley, and Linda Wheeler

Phoenix Union High School District
2526 West Osborn Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85017

While a wide range of materials exists which describe the known high school dropout, a disparate number of materials are available to describe those dropouts who return to school. An equally limited amount of information is available for intervention with potential dropouts -- particularly information in language written for the dropout and utilizing data provided by former dropouts.

In an effort to expand the available data on options for dropouts, a special research study was conducted during the 1979-80 school year. The intent of the study was to ascertain what, if any, viable options existed for dropouts, and the reasons dropouts elected to return to complete their formal education.

The research design, utilizing an investigative approach as the primary focus, provides information on the dropout problem from a sociological, educational, and occupational perspective. An assessment of school and training opportunities in the public and private sector was compiled. A total of 192 schools, agencies and special interest groups (i.e., armed services, labor unions) were contacted to ascertain age and education requirements for entry/acceptance in their training program.

Mail surveys and telephone conversations were conducted with Personnel Management Association members, public service agencies, and large employers in the Metropolitan Phoenix area. A second data base to be used for counseling potential dropouts, was constructed to determine the types of employment open to high school dropouts. Businesses surveyed included manufacturing, hotel, supermarket and convenience markets, aerospace and



(OVER)

computer, printing/graphics, insurance, health services, banks, savings and loan, educational institutions, utilities, employment agencies and temporary personnel agencies, local government offices, public service agencies, building materials, retail distribution, data entry, rental agencies and aircraft related. Job opportunities in these various industries were analyzed for age, education and entry level employment data.

A third sample population, enrolled in one of five District alternative programs, was surveyed to determine why they had returned to school (N=267). They were asked to complete a questionnaire which asked why they dropped out of school, what their plans were, what they did while they were out, and why they returned to school. Demographic data including age, sex, ethnicity, length of time out of school, etc. were compiled. Results of the student plans, actual experiences, and reasons for returning were tabulated. There were no significant differences in response between male and female students on the question "Why did you drop out of school?" or "Why are you back in school now?" (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Two-Sample Test, $p > .05$). However, there were significant differences by sex in the plans individuals had on leaving school and in what happened to them after they left ($p < .05$).

Student ideas for program changes and their suggestions for help for potential dropouts were presented, in addition to the researcher's recommendations. Where appropriate, notations were provided to accompany any recommendation which would necessitate changes in existing Board of Education policy.

Follow-through activities since the initial research have included publication of the technical report, meetings with counselors and alternative program staffs to review the materials, review by administration and modification of several Board policies, and the development of a series of brochures. The graphics for these brochures are presently being completed, and the materials will be made available through all counseling offices, alternative schools, and campus opportunity halls. Additionally, copies of the brochures will be made available to eighth graders from thirteen elementary "feeder" districts to the Phoenix Union High School District.

Although the investigative methodology has certain limitations, in this instance it has provided a viable means of analyzing the "state of the art" with respect to dropout options in a major metropolitan area. It has also provided invaluable information for use in program development, policy analysis/change, and counseling and intervention with potential dropouts. This information has already been used by local public service agencies, and most, if not all, of the materials are transportable to other schools/districts. The data can be used immediately by school personnel to improve retention rates and enhance the teaching-learning process in their schools by addressing the unique and subtle characteristics of the potential dropout. Copies of the brochures and discussion paper will be available to participants.

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DROP OUT?

CHECK IT OUT!

DROPOUTS
WHO
RETURN

IF I LEAVE SCHOOL

WHERE
CAN I GET
JOB TRAINING

IF I LEAVE SCHOOL

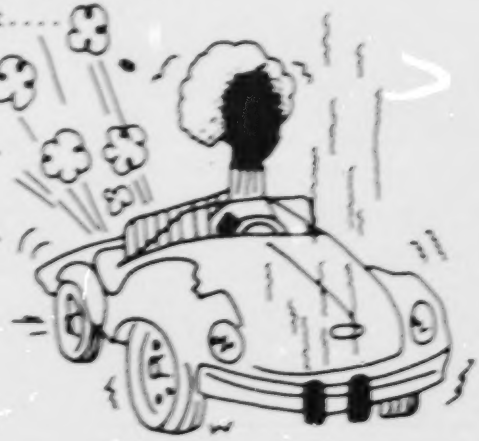
WILL I
BE ABLE
TO FIND A JOB

# THINKING ABOUT DROPPING OUT?

BEFORE YOU hang glide over the Grand Canyon....
sign a ten-year contract....
join the Army....
sell your tape deck....
move to North Dakota....
quit your job....
climb Mt. St. Helens....
buy a used car....

AND....

BEFORE YOU drop out of school....



The following pages contain comments from students who dropped out of school, then came back. You will be interested in what they have to say. Here are some of their ideas....

# WHY DID YOU DROP OUT OF SCHOOL?

Had too many ABSENCES.

Wasn't worth my time.
Classes weren't fun to go to.

I had a lot of problems
with PITCHING.

Moved out of parent's home, couldn't support
myself and go to school also.

I didn't feel that it was
worth making up for
anymore.

Went out during class and partied.

Teachers didn't help much
I got DISCOURAGED.

Went to the HOSPITAL.

Didn't want to go to class.
It was BORING.

Mother got sick.

Just couldn't stay in classes,
work was hard,
goofed around a lot. Now
I REGRET IT!

©

# WHAT HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE OUT?

I went to a TRADE SCHOOL for a while and dropped out.

I did hardly NOTHING.

I was a runaway!

Had a GOOD TIME.

Took care of sister-in-law.

WORKED part-time.

I HUNG AROUND with friends.

I didn't like it.

Got pregnant.

Got BORED.



I LOOKED FOR A JOB.....BUT.....I DIDN'T find one!!

# WHY ARE YOU BACK IN SCHOOL NOW?

I want it for MYSELF.

I thought about what I could do without an education. I was pregnant. When I went back I was thinking about my child's life as well as mine.

Navy will NOT take me without a GED.

To get my DIPLOMA.

Get a better chance of a GOOD CAREER someday.

I want it for MYSELF and to make my parents PROUD OF ME.

Studying to be someone so I could make my life HAPPIER.

I found it was IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT AN EDUCATION.



I GOT SMART!!

So stay in school, it's not worth it in the end.

Stick it out in school. It's a lot easier than trying to get the GED. It's hard!

# ANY ADVICE ABOUT DROPPING OUT?

Try your best not to drop out because it's not easy in the future.

DON'T! Education is important if you want to make good money and not have to work your rear off. If you like working as a slave and barely making it then take your best shot.

You're doing the wrong thing when you drop out of school. You're a nothing.

STAY IN SCHOOL FOOL!

# ON THE OTHER HAND....

If you're thinking of dropping out of school FIRST TAKE A LOOK AT THE THREE OTHER BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES or read the full report titled: "THE DROPOUT PROBLEM".

Your counselor can give you the report and can also help you check out other information you'll need as a drop-out, such as job opportunities, training programs, or special schooling. Why not meet with your counselor soon?

This brochure is one of a series of four. The information is from a published report titled:

SPECIAL REPORT: THE DROPOUT PROBLEM
Report No. 22:11:79/80:013a

PHOENIX UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, 210
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Phoenix, Arizona 85017

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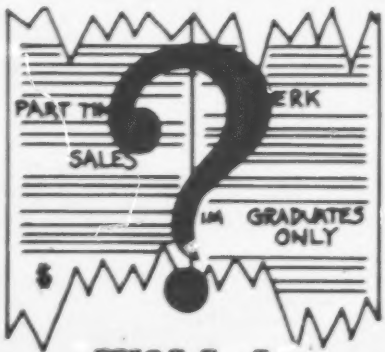


WILL I
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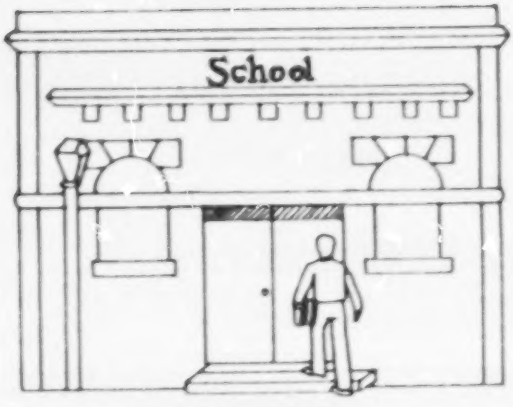



# DROPOUTS WHO RETURN

A lot of students dropped out of school last year. Many of them did not like being "dropouts" and came back to school.

This booklet tells about some of the students who dropped out, what happened to them while they were out, why they came back to school, and why they like being there.

# WHO CAME BACK TO SCHOOL?

Students who dropped out and then came back to school, answered a questionnaire about being a dropout.

They went to the Alternative Schools in our district

| | |
|---|---|
| Alhambra | 35 |
| Bostrom | 97 |
| CEC | 105 |
| Cyesis | 10 |
| North | 20 |
| Total | 267 |

There were about the same number of males and females.

| | |
|---|---|
| MALES | 49.4% |
| FEMALES | 48.7% |

There were Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. No Orientals responded to the questionnaire.

Most students who dropped out and returned were 15, 16, and 17 years old.

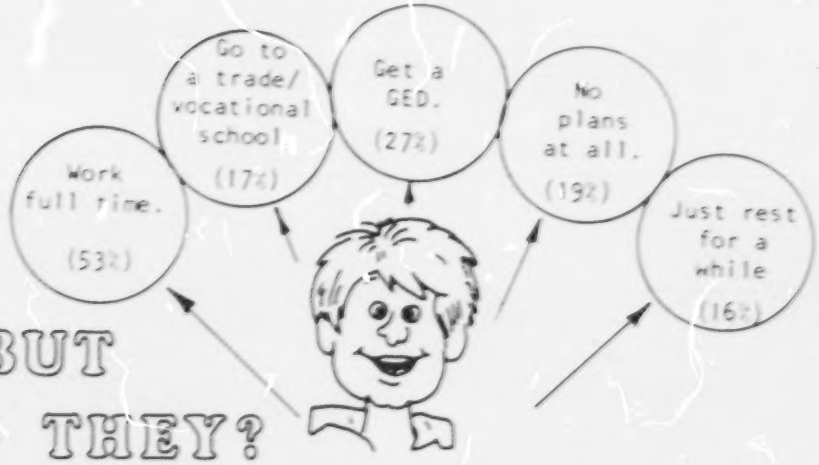
# WHY DID THEY DROP OUT OF SCHOOL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Each student gave about three reasons for dropping out of school, but the main reason was that they got kicked out for poor attendance. Many did not like their teachers, which is probably why their attendance was poor. A few had trouble getting to school, and some had personal problems.

# REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL.....
# "TOP TEN"

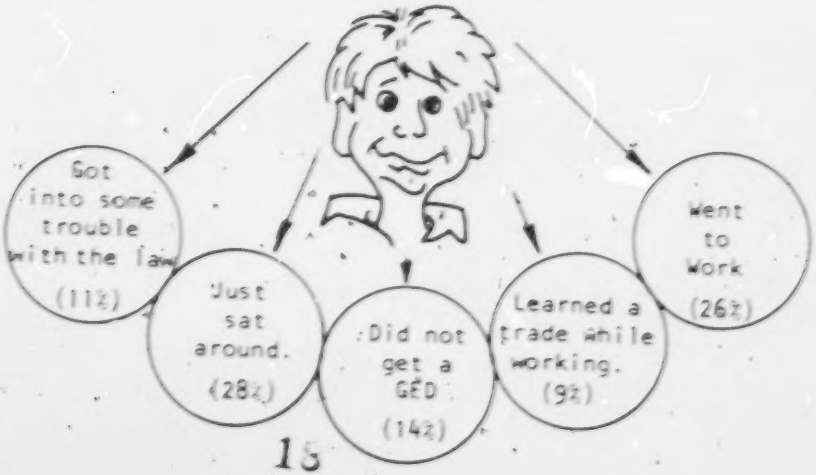
1. Kicked out for poor attendance
2. Did not like my classes
3. Did not like my teachers
4. School attendance policy
5. Got bad grades / felt discouraged
6. Don't like school
7. Got kicked out for poor grades
8. Family problems
9. Personal problems (illness, pregnancy, etc.)
10. Could not get courses I wanted

# WHAT DID THEY WANT TO DO AFTER DROPPING OUT?




## BUT DID THEY?

Not really. Here is what most of the students really did after they dropped out.

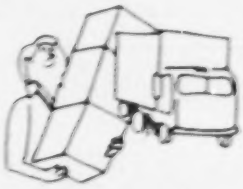


# SOME OF THEM FOUND JOBS. WHAT KIND?

Some of the dropouts found jobs. The jobs often did not pay much, did not have much future, or did not have good work hours. Here are some of the jobs these dropouts found.

-Grocery store
-Bag boy

-Phone solicitor
-Clerical
-Cashier



-Truck loader
-Warehouse
-Factory

-Painter
-Plumber
-Laborer
-Carpenter

-Car wash

-Print Shop
-Sign Lettering

-Janitor
-Orderly

-Fast Food Restaurant
-Busboy
-Dishwasher

-Palm tree trimmer
-Gardener

## BUT EVEN THE DROPOUTS WHO FOUND JOBS CAME BACK TO SCHOOL..... WHY?

The students gave a lot of reasons for coming back to school, but there was one big reason that most of them came back:

I wanted to graduate so I could have more opportunities (higher education, better job, etc.)

The other reasons for coming back to school were:

- I NEEDED MORE EDUCATION to support myself or my family.
- There was no future in what I was doing.
- I WAS BORED being out of school.
- My parents made me go back to school.

---

## WILL THESE STUDENTS STAY IN SCHOOL NOW?

Most of the students say they like school now and they gave many reasons for staying in school. The Alternative Schools they attend are a little different than the regular high schools. Here are the five main reasons they are staying in school:

It's a good school

Shorter school day

More individual help

The teachers

It's stricter

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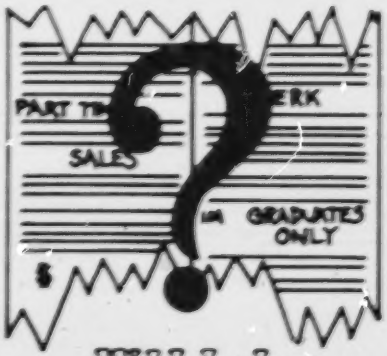


WILL I
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# ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR CAREER AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿ ✿

note: students must pay tuition to attend the types of schools mentioned in this pamphlet.

# INDUSTRIAL, TECHNICAL AND TRADE SCHOOLS

...OF 28 SCHOOLS CONTACTED:

- 1 technical institute enrolls dropouts
- 1 refrigeration school enrolls dropouts
- other schools require applicants to pass TESTS in:
  - -reading
  - -math
- -schools in the following fields DO NOT ACCEPT people under ages 18 to 21:
  - -bartending
  - -truck driving
  - -real estate
- -many schools REQUIRE a diploma or GED

# BEAUTY AND BARBER SCHOOLS

...OF 12 SCHOOLS CONTACTED:

- -all report MINIMUM AGES for state licenses:
  - -16½ for barbers
  - -18 for cosmeticians

- -most schools want students AGE 17 OR OLDER WHO HAVE A DIPLOMA OR A GED
- -a few schools accept OLDER OR MARRIED dropouts
- -2 schools accept dropouts of any age who have COMPLETED THE 10th GRADE

# BUSINESS OR SECRETARIAL SCHOOLS

...OF 7 SCHOOLS CONTACTED:

- 2 accept young dropouts
- 1 accepts a few dropouts, but usually only older people
- 4 *REQUIRE* a diploma or GED

---

# MEDICAL OR DENTAL ASSISTANT SCHOOLS

...OF THE 6 SCHOOLS CONTACTED:

- 4 *REQUIRE* a diploma or GED
- 1 accepts dropouts IF they are working on their GED
- 1 accepts a few dropouts

# GED PROGRAMS

(STUDY FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TEST)

-These programs have AGE REQUIREMENTS of 18 years, except under special circumstances.

-NO ONE UNDER AGE 17 may take the GED test.

-Dropouts who are 17 years old and have been out of school for AT LEAST ONE YEAR may take the GED if they have a letter from someone who will hire them when they have passed the test.

-17 year old dropouts need such things as PARENT'S APPROVAL, A BIRTH CERTIFICATE, OR A LETTER from an employer, school, or armed services recruiter to get permission to take the test.

-GED study programs are given in the PHOENIX UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT and at several community colleges. If interested, see your Opportunity Hall proctor, your school counselor, or call 257-3182.

CALL 257-3182

OR 255-5802

to take the GED

(Requirements subject to change as of January 1st.)

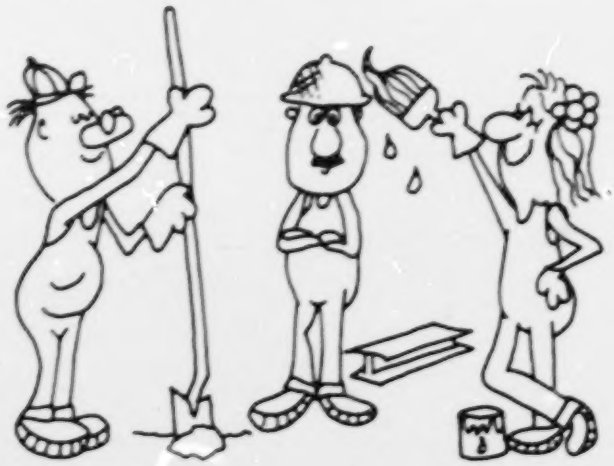
# THE ARMED SERVICES

-The Army will enlist 17 year old dropouts with their parent's consent but many of their technical schools admit only those recruits who PASS A SKILL OR APTITUDE TEST.

-The Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard accept 17-year-olds with parent's consent.

-The Air Force REQUIRES a diploma or GED.

# LABOR UNION: MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND APPRENTICESHIPS



...OF THE 10 UNIONS CONTACTED:

- 4 *REQUIRE* a diploma or GED
- 2 *REQUIRE* a diploma or GED *AND* age of 18 years
- 2 *REQUIRE* that the person applying *ALREADY BE EMPLOYED IN THAT TRADE*
- 1 *REQUIRES* a *MINIMUM AGE* of 18, but no diploma or GED
- 1 accepts people under age 18 without a diploma or GED

# PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES: HELP FOR DROPOUTS

...OF 12 AGENCIES CONTACTED:

- 2 serve only county residents *OUTSIDE OF PHOENIX*
- 2 have an *AGE REQUIREMENT* of 17 years
- 3 provide on-the-job training for dropouts
- 3 provide job counseling and placement for dropouts
- 1 provides drug abuse counseling
- many agencies sometimes have *LONG WAITING LISTS.* They may not be able to help you right away, *BUT* the Phoenix Union High School District can!

*FOR MORE INFORMATION TALK TO YOUR COUNSELOR.*

*FREE* booklets on the youth unemployment problem and job qualifications are available. Call 255-4791 (Arizona Department of Economic Security).

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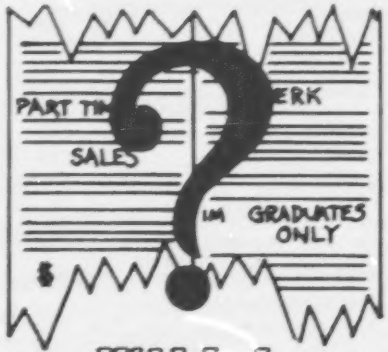


WILL I
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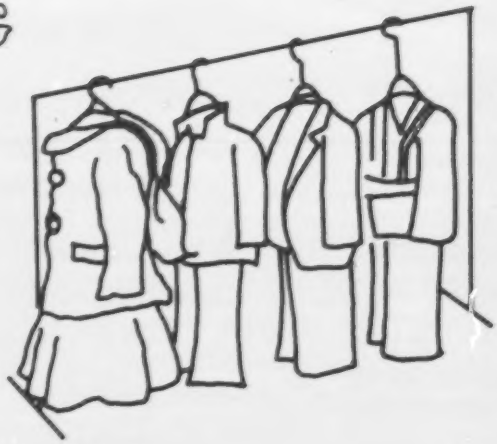
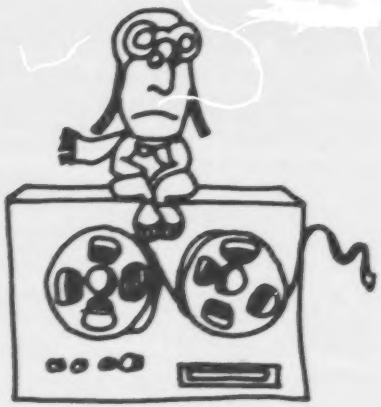
# HIRING POLICIES PHOENIX AREA

## MANUFACTURING

...OF 21 COMPANIES CONTACTED:

- 18 require employees to be *AGE 18* because of:
  - -health regulations
  - -safety regulations
  - -insurance regulations
- 1 requires all employees to have a *DIPLOMA OR GED*
- 1 hires only those over *AGE 17*
- 1 has some limited opportunities for dropouts

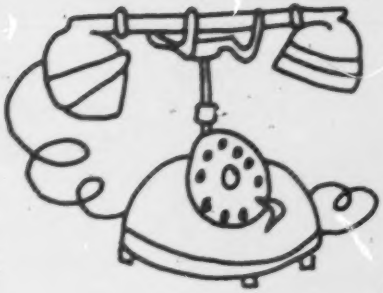




## COMPUTERS, AEROSPACE

...OF 4 COMPANIES CONTACTED:

-*NONE* hire dropouts



# PHONE SOLICITATION

...OF 2 CHAINS CONTACTED:

-Both *DON'T* hire dropouts because:
  -dropouts don't speak well on the phone
  -dropouts can't write down answers quick'y and correctly

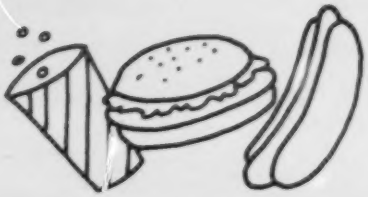
# FAST FOOD CHAINS

...OF 2 COMPANIES CONTACTED:

-Both will hire anyone who is *AT LEAST 16 YEARS OLD*

-The jobs are *MINIMUM WAGE*, at the entry level

-*NO PROMOTION* is possible without a diploma or GED



# EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

...OF 4 AGENCIES CONTACTED:

-*NONE WILL ACCEPT* dropouts as clients, yet will try to place dropouts in jobs *IF* they have:
  -intelligence
  -aptitude for the job
  -a good appearance
  -dependability
  -a phone
  -a car

# INSURANCE

...OF 5 COMPANIES CONTACTED:

- 3 companies will *NOT* hire dropouts
- 2 will hire dropouts as:
  - -mail clerks
  - -other low level clerical workers
- -*ADVANCEMENT* to higher positions require typing and math skills

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

...OF 5 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CONTACTED:

- 3 require a *DIPLOMA, GED,* or passage of a *WRITTEN EXAM* before hiring
- 2 will hire dropouts in:
  - -food service
  - -custodial work
  - -recreational work
  - -clerk positions
- -Other jobs require *AGE 18,* plus experience

# HOSPITALS, HEALTH SERVICES

...OF 6 INSTITUTIONS CONTACTED:

- 4 do *NOT* hire dropouts
- 2 hire dropouts as:
  - -waitresses
  - -food service workers
  - -pot washers
  - -file clerks

# HOTELS, MOTELS

...OF 3 CHAINS CONTACTED:

-All have some low-paying, unskilled jobs for which they will hire dropouts

-Most people who are actually *HIRED* are over *AGE 18*

# SUPERMARKETS, CONVENIENCE MARKETS

...OF 5 MARKETS CONTACTED:

-Many *CARRYOUT* positions are available, some dropouts are hired

-Promotion is not possible without skills in *ARITHMETIC*

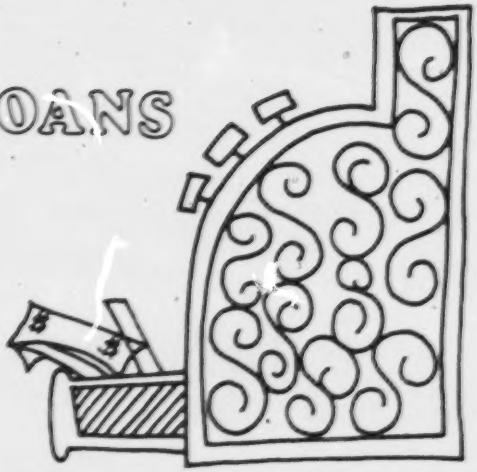
-There is an *AGE REQUIREMENT* of 19 years for:
- -stocker
- -warehouse worker
- -convenience market clerks (must handle liquor)

# PRINTERS

...OF 2 COMPANIES CONTACTED:

-Both companies have *AGE REQUIREMENTS* of 18 years

# BANKS, SAVINGS AND LOANS



...OF 8 BANKS CONTACTED:

- 3 require all employees to have a *DIPLOMA OR GED*
- 1 requires a *DIPLOMA OR GED*, or *EXPERIENCE AS AN ENCODER*
- 4 will hire dropouts in:
  - -entry level clerical jobs
  - -maintenance

-People actually *HIRED* at these banks usually have a *DIPLOMA* and even some *COLLEGE*

# UTILITIES

...OF 3 UTILITIES CONTACTED:

- 2 require employees to be over *AGE 16*
- 1 will hire young dropouts as janitors, if they have *PARENT'S APPROVAL*

# SCHOOLS, COLLEGES

...OF 4 SCHOOLS CONTACTED:

- 3 require a *DIPLOMA OR GED* for all staff
- 1 will hire people without degrees as custodians, but *USUALLY* gives jobs to students at the school

# SUMMARY OF JOB REQUIREMENTS

| FIELD | REQUIRE HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE | AGE REQUIREMENT OF 17, 18 OR 19 YEARS OLD | SPECIAL SKILLS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Manufacturing | | X | |
| Hotel | | | |
| Supermarket | | X (for many jobs) | Math |
| Convenience Market | | X | |
| Aerospace, computers | X | X | |
| Printing | | X | |
| Insurance | | | Typing, Math |
| Health Services | | X (for many jobs) | |
| Banks, Savings | X (for many jobs) | | Typing, Math |
| Education | X | | |
| Utilities | | X | |
| Employment Agencies Temporary Personnel | | X (for many jobs) | Typing, good appearance, dependability |
| Local Government | X | X (for many jobs) | |
| Public Service Agencies | | | |
| Miscellaneous | X (for many jobs) | X (for many jobs) | |